

News Release
U.S. Department of Justice
United States Attorney
District of Rhode Island



February 4, 2008



**Bronx man pleads guilty to firearms charge;
Gun seized in Pawtucket**

Felix Rodriguez, 31, of the Bronx, New York, pleaded guilty today to being a felon in possession of a firearm. Rodriguez admitted that he had a handgun in the waistband of his pants when he was sitting in a parked car in downtown Pawtucket last April.

United States Attorney Robert Clark Corrente announced the guilty plea, which Rodriguez entered today before U.S. District Court Judge William E. Smith in U.S. District Court, Providence.

At the plea hearing, Assistant U.S. Attorney Zechariah Chafee said the government could prove that, on April 19, 2007, Rodriguez was sitting in a car that was parked in a lot at Broad and Exchange Streets in Pawtucket, when Pawtucket Police officers approached the car. The officers were responding to a police dispatch warning of a car in which occupants had displayed a gun. The parked car that Rodriguez was in matched the description of the car in the dispatch.

The officers ordered the three occupants out of the car and patted them down. In Rodriguez's waistband, an officer found a loaded, snub-nosed .44 caliber handgun. Rodriguez claimed that he'd found it earlier that night during a fight at a strip club.

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Rodriguez was previously convicted in Virginia of cocaine trafficking and possessing a firearm. As a felon, he is prohibited by federal law from possessing a firearm.

The statutory maximum penalty for being a felon in possession of a firearm is ten years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

Pawtucket Police and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives investigated the case. Assistant U.S. Attorney Chafee prosecuted it as part of **Project Safe Neighborhoods**, a Department of Justice initiative against gun crimes. Under Project Safe Neighborhoods, the U.S. Attorney's Office, working with ATF, the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office, and other agencies, aggressively prosecutes federal firearms offenses in an effort to incarcerate those responsible for gun violence and deter others from committing gun crimes. Since 2001, gun offenders in Rhode Island have been sentenced to a total of more than 850 years in federal prison.

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